

Fort Lee, Va.

SRT Tackles Life-Threatening Situations

WHEN crime puts someone's life at stake at Fort Lee, Va., the commander calls the Special Reaction Team.

The installation's 10-member team trains diligently to prepare for such life-threatening situations as hostage seizures, terrorism operations or barricaded suspects.

"We train with these scenarios to see how well our team responds and to ensure they are prepared for a real-life case," said

SSG Arthur Rich, NCOIC for the SRT.

"We also see how well we interact with the Criminal Investigations Department people, who would be the hostage negotiators."

Team members recently conducted an exercise in which they assaulted an armed individual who was threatening to kill his family.

The SRT members are regular military-police soldiers who volunteer to become part of the anonymous force.

The selection process involves days of training and testing, and includes an APFT, swim test, rucksack march, obstacle course, land navigation tasks, marksmanship proficiency tests, a written test and an oral presentation before the selection board.

"Being on the SRT is mentally challenging because of the difficult decisions we have to make when preparing for an assault," said one SRT member.

"We have to think about whether we're going to shoot a suspect. We have to coordinate a way to disarm the suspect and take control of the situation. We must communicate with one another to successfully execute the mission."

The entire team agreed that it's exciting to be part of a group that does something extraordinary and at the same time helps rescue people from dangerous situations.

— SPC Jorge Gomez, Fort Lee Public Affairs Office



Ellen A. Hart



Soldiers of Headquarters and HQs. Company, 3rd COSCOM, at work on the playing field of the Advena/Bärenherz Hospiz just outside Wiesbaden Army Airfield.

Wiesbaden, Germany

COSCOM Soldiers Work For Good Cause

RAKES, shovels and wheelbarrows were the weapons of the day for about 20 soldiers from Germany's 3rd Corps Support Command, who assisted the staff and residents of Erbenheim's Advena/Bärenherz Hospiz just outside Wiesbaden Army Airfield.

In lieu of sergeant's time training, the soldiers volunteered to level an area of ground for seeding and planting of flowers around new playground equipment donated to the hospice by a benefactor in Leipzig, Germany.

"This was a consolidated effort by the platoon ser-

geants and their soldiers to volunteer for a good cause,” said SFC Alexie Rogers, who organized the work detail. The project was initiated by a contact in the German-American Friends Club in Wiesbaden.

The Bärenherz, which opened in April and means “Heart of a Teddy Bear,” takes in severely sick, handicapped or terminally ill children. Advena accepts terminally ill adults, and a third organization, Wohnen im Alter (Living in Old Age), provides independence for senior citizens and handicapped adults to rent apartments in the hospice complex.

“We have a mixture of people,” said Monika Stark-Mitchell, Wohnen im Alter’s manager. “I have 35 tenants between the ages of 24 to 93 in my area. Right now we have four sick children in the Bärenherz.”

The children were the motivation for the soldiers to get their hands and boots dirty.

“I’ve been blessed to be in the condition I am in, so I thought it would be good to help those less fortunate,” said SSG Neil Chambers, HHC, 3rd COSCOM.

Fueled by coffee, orange juice, brötchen, cold cuts, bratwurst and schwenk steaks, the soldiers worked through the day until rain eventually halted their efforts.

“Everyone had their different reasons for helping here,” Rogers said. “We are truly blessed. This was one way to give back.” — *Ellen A. Hart, 3rd COSCOM PAO*

Arlington, Va.

Guard Enters “Pedal to the Metal” World

THE 350,000-member Army National Guard is a diverse force that has repeatedly and speedily deployed soldiers to places like Bosnia and Afghanistan, and it flies helicopters and drives 60-ton Abrams tanks across terrible terrain.

Now the Guard is venturing into the “pedal to the metal” world of NASCAR stock-car racing, promoting its benefits and awareness before one of America’s largest sporting audiences. With red “NATIONAL GUARD” lettering adorning its hood, car No. 54 — an 800-horsepower Chevrolet Monte Carlo — roared into NASCAR’s Winston Cup Series in mid-October.

This is the National Guard’s Year of Diversity, and the National Guard will be the primary advertiser for a new high-speed team that also intends to bring diversity to America’s premier racing enterprise that nearly 90 million people watch in person and on national television from February through November.

BH Motorsports, the team formed by African Americans Sam Belnavis and Tinsley Hughes, began racing the “Guard Car” at Lowe’s Motor Speedway near Charlotte, N.C., on Oct. 13.

The new team plans to compete in three Winston Cup events during the rest of this season before running in the entire 2003 series beginning in February at Daytona Beach, Fla.

“This is a significant partnership,” said LTG Roger Schultz, director for the Army National Guard.

He said this venture was also about the NASCAR fans.

“They’re very loyal and very dedicated,” Schultz said.

National Guard officials also like the marketing statistics that add to NASCAR’s appeal, as this country’s most popular and fastest growing spectator sport. Nearly one third of the fans are between the recruitable ages of 18-34.

Veteran driver Ron Hornaday, a two-time champion in the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series, has been piloting the “Guard Car.”

“I’m excited to be part of the National Guard,” said Hornaday, who has won 17 Winston West Series races. “I enjoy and respect all the National Guard soldiers around my car.” — *MSG Bob Haskell, National Guard Bureau PAO*



LTG Roger Schultz, director of the Army National Guard, beams from behind the wheel of the NASCAR racer carrying the Guard’s logo.